



Tobacco Tid-bits

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Southwest Washington Health District

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Healthy Local Dining

The Southwest Washington Health District and Community Choices 2010 launched a media campaign this month revealing a plan to make non-smoking restaurants more recognizable to the public. There are 267 smoke-free restaurants in Clark and Skamania Counties. The Health District is handing out bright blue smoke-free decals that will be displayed at the entrance of those restaurants. The decal coupled with a new smoke-free dining guide will provide residents with a wide variety of healthy dining choices. The smoke-free dining guide lists restaurants alphabetically according to city. "We have made huge strides in Southwest Washington protecting children, employees, and the general public from the hazards of secondhand smoke," said James Lanz, RN, Office on Tobacco at Southwest Washington Health District. "Nearly half of all the restaurants in Clark and Skamania Counties are now smokefree. That's ten times as many as we had a few years ago." According to Lanz, when the first smokefree dining guide was printed in 1992, it listed just 26 restaurants. The Health District sent out press packets to local media this month including a sample decal and restaurant guide - as well as educational materials. Look for the smokefree dining guide on the web at: www.swmedctr.com. Click on "Health News" then "Health and Wellness."

Signs Replacing Billboards

You may have noticed tobacco advertising seems to have doubled in convenience stores, and according to the *Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids* - that is no accident. The group recently released a study showing that since the settlement-mandated ban on tobacco billboard advertising last year - tobacco companies have substantially increased retail store advertising and promotions. The group is calling on State Attorney General's to step up investigations into whether tobacco firms are violating the settlement by targeting youth. They are also asking convenience stores to curtail tobacco advertising. www.tobaccofreekids.org.

Cigarette Price Hike

The price of smoking went up again. Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds raised their wholesale cigarette prices by 6 cents a pack on July 31. The increase will help cover the multi-billion dollar state tobacco settlements. In the four years *Mom and Pop's Little Store* has been doing business in Clark County they say they have seen cigarette prices soar from \$1.99 a pack up to \$3.45 a pack - but so far it hasn't stopped many of their customers. Owner Sandra Ross says, people are finding alternatives like cheaper brands or rolling their own. However, in the long run the *Surgeon General* feels price hikes will deter smokers. In his recent report on smoking rates, Dr. David Satcher says one of the key actions in cutting tobacco use in half in the next decade is "increasing tobacco prices and excise taxes." His report suggests a 10 percent price increase will reduce overall cigarette consumption by 3 to 5 percent.

Help Teens Quit with NOT Program

The *American Lung Association of Washington* is recruiting facilitators for its N-O-T program. N-O-T is a voluntary youth smoking cessation program designed to help adolescents quit smoking and increase healthy lifestyle behaviors like physical activity or nutrition. Communities and schools can implement N-O-T by sending a facilitator to training. Training is a 6 hour commitment and costs \$100 a person. This includes, manuals, program packets, lunch, program evaluations, a certificate of completion and support. The next training's are scheduled September 19, in Bellingham and September 26, in Yakima. For more information call: 1-800 732-9339 or e-mail: alaw@alaw.org.

Insurers - Big Tobacco Investors

Tobacco causes 400,000 deaths a year - yet insurance agencies are major shareholders in tobacco firms. Despite calls to divest - firms like Prudential have actually increased their share holdings in tobacco by nearly 400% in the last four years. CIGNA and MetLife are also major tobacco stock holders. *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Smokers Trying Harder to Quit

Americans are trying harder than ever to quit smoking. According to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, the attempt-to-quit rate is four times greater than before chemical help was available. Tobacco users are turning to products like patches and nicotine gum to help them break the habit. The CDC analyzed data from pharmacies and over-the-counter purchases of smoking products to conclude that Americans made more than 8 million attempts to quit smoking in 1997 and 1998. Attempts to quit increase nearly every time a new product is released.

Regulating "Eclipse" Cigarette

The top public-health organizations in the nation asked the Food and Drug Administration to regulate Eclipse cigarettes this month. Eclipse is being marketed as a less risky cigarette. The American Cancer Society and American Medical Association were among 22 groups that sent a petition to the FDA August 1, stating that Eclipse is a nicotine-delivery system - not a cigarette - making it eligible for government regulation. Cigarettes are exempt from any regulation. *Tobacco BBS - Winston Salem Journal*.

Hello - Do You Smoke?

About 200 phones are ringing in every county in Washington with a tobacco surveyor on the other line. The Department of Health is using the telephone to find out how their Tobacco Prevention and Control Program is working in the state. In Clark County 400 surveys are being done. If the household has kids age 10-17, then a youth survey is conducted as well. According to Julia Dilley, Epidemiologist, State Tobacco and Prevention Program, the surveys last about 15 minutes and include questions about tobacco use, quitting tobacco, secondhand smoke, the tobacco industry, school programs and community and family norms. The survey is happening August 16 - October 9, 2000. Surveys will take place annually and results will be made available to the public through the DOH Web site at: www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco/.

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